

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO ?SECSTATE WASHDC 1931

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

?AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1743

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AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 15794

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR SN ID ASEAN

SUBJECT: RELATIONS BETWEEN SINGAPORE AND INDONESIA

1. LIM BIAN KIE, AIDE TO PRESIDENTIAL CONFIDANT ALI MURTOPO, TOLD POLCOUNS LATE DEC 24 THAT SUHARTO IS "FURIOUS" OVER SINGAPORE'S ABSTENTION ON UNGA TIMOR RESOLUTION WHEN ALL OTHER ASEAN COUNTRIES JOINED INDONESIA IN OPPOSING IT. SUHARTO THOUGHT HE HAD OBTAINED LEE'S "UNDERSTANDING" OF INDONESIAN POSITION ON TIMOR DURING EARLY SEPT BALI MEETING, AND SINGAPORE VOTE CAME AS VERY COLD SHOWER.

2. ACCORDING BIAN KIE, ALL EFFORTS WHICH WENT INTO LAYING TO REST INCIDENT OF TWO MARINES EXECUTED IN SINGAPORE HAVE BEEN NEGATED AND GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN SHUHARTO AND LEE ARE GONE -- PROBABLY FOREVER. QUOTING
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HAVANESE PROVERBS BIAN KIE SAID THAT ONE CANNOT WITH

IMPUNITY INSULT TWICE (I.E. MARINES AND TIMOR VOTE) A JAVANESE LEADER SUCH AS SUHARTO. BIAN KIE SAID THAT THERE EVEN SPECULATION WITHIN GOI THAT SUHARTO WILL SEEK REASON TO ABORT PLANNED ASEAN SUMMIT, AND IT CERTAIN THAT GOI IS MUCH LESS LIKELY TO BE AMENABLE TO INCREASED INTRA-ASEAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION WHICH SINGAPORE FAVORS. BIAN KIE EXPLAINED THAT ONLY RATIONALE GOI CAN SEE FOR LEE'S ACTION IS BRUNEI, WHERE SINGAPORE OPPOSES MALAYSIA'S TERRITORIAL AMBITIONS. INDONESIAN LEADERSHIP WAS CHAGRINED THAT GOS APPARENTLY CONSIDERED BRUNEI MORE IMPORTANT THAN RELATIONSHIP WITH INDONESIA.

3. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF SINGAPORE DCM KESAVAPANY -- CONTRADICTING BIAN KIE -- SAID GOI HAD NOT TOLD SINGAPOREANS OF INTENDED MOVE INTO TIMOR, AND THEREFORE SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN SURPRISED AT SINGAPORE'S ABSTENTION. FURTHER SINGAPORE HAS NEVER CAST VOTE IN FAVOR OF TERRITORIAL EXPANSION BY MILITARY MEANS.

4. COMMENT: WHEN UNGA TIMOR VOTE FIRST TOOK PLACE, WORKING LEVEL GOI OFFICIALS EXPRESSED GREAT UNHAPPINESS OVER AUSTRALIAN VOTE AND ONLY MILD DISTRESS OVER SINGAPOREAN ABSTENTION. SUHARTO, WHO PLACES STRONG EMPHASIS ON PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS, APPARENTLY WAS FAR MORE DISPLEASED WITH LACK OF SUPPORT FROM LEE, ON WHICH HE COUNTING, THAN ON OPPOSITION FROM CARETAKER GOVERNMENT OF FRASER WITH WHOM HE HAS YET TO ESTABLISH CLOSE TIES. (INDONESIANS NOW ALSO NOTE THAT AUSTRALIAN VOTE CAME BEFORE ELECTIONS, AND THAT ELECTED FRASER GOVERNMENT MOST HELPFUL IN SECURITY COUNCIL TIMOR DELIBERATIONS.) WHILE SUHARTO-LEE SPLIT MAY BE EVENTUALLY PAPERED OVER, CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS DOES NOT AUGER WELL FOR PROJECTED ASEAN SUMMIT.
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